A CATECHISM FOR BISHOPS, DEANS, PREBENDS, DOCTORS, VICARS, CURATES, AND ALL PRELATICALS,

FOR

Them to Read in the Fear of the *LORD GOD*, and with a meek and quiet Spirit.

By *WILLIAM SMITH.*

LONDON, Printed in the Year, 1662.

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A *Catechism* for *Bishops, Deans, Prebends, Doctors, Vicars, Curates,* and all *Prelaticals,* for Them to Read in the Fear of the *Lord God,* and with a meek and quiet Spirit.

THere is in man a *Corruptible will,* an *Earthly wisdom,* and a *Carnal mind*; and where these bear rule, there is a strong Enmity against God, and all things that be good; and under these Corruptible, Earthly, Carnal things, the Seed of God is in bondage, and groans under their burden; and in that state the understanding of all men is darkned and fast closed, that the things of God neither are nor can be perceived: And this is the ground of Error, when the understanding is so darkned, that the things of God cannot be perceived; and then not being known as they are in the ground, they are supposed to be what they are not, and so Opinions drawn concerning them, and Professions made of them, and a Worship and Service set up in them, when they have no savour of God, nor agreement with the Scriptures of Truth; So, for *Doctrine* men set up *Traditions,* which rise from the many Inventions: And from this ground is risen all your Profession and Worship which in your Prelatical Power is set up, and unto which you would compel a Conformity, and impose it upon all Consciences, which is a thing of great weight, and needful to be truly tryed and examined, before it be so eagerly pursued, and so wilfully endeavoured to be imposed.

Therefore admit in coolness of a true Examination and Tryal by the Spirit of Truth, and from the Scriptures of Truth, and if your Practice and Worship be found to agree in one, without adding or diminishing, then you will be freely owned, without any Law to compel; but if your Practice and Worship be found contrary, then be not angry because it is denied and testified against; for in so doing, you will manifest degeneration from reasonable men: therefore, hear your Examination cooly and quietly, and if Truth prevail, then own it and submit unto it, and cease from your Traditions; but if you have any thing against it, then bring forth your strong Reasons, and prove them from the Scriptures of Truth, that it may be manifest to the under-

496 ſtandings of people, what is Truth, and what is Error: And for the better underſtanding of it, here followeth a ſhort *Catechiſm*, which is given forth in love to the Simple, and for you to reade and peruſe, ye *Biſhops*, *Doctors*, *Vicars*, *Curats*, and *all Prelaticals*, wherein you may ſee *Tradition* and *Truth* moderately reaſoning.

Tradition. *I have heard that there is a God, and that he is the maker of all things: and I have alſo heard that from Generation to Generation, this God hath been worſhipped and ſerved; and I think it but my reaſonable duty to do as others have done before me.*

Truth. One onely true wiſe God there is, who is the maker of all things, and is over all things; but if thou haſt no more knowledge of him, than by what thou heareſt, thou art yet without him, and a ſtranger to him, and art an ignorant worſhipper, and doſt not know what thou worſhippeſt; and what others have done in Generations paſt, will not make thy ſervice accepted, though thou mayeſt worſhip in the obſervation, and do all things in the cuſtom of it; for it is only the preſent manifeſtation of God's Spirit in every man, in which God is truly ſerved and worſhipped, and in which the Service and Worſhip is accepted.

Trad. *But cannot I come to know God by hearing that which is reported of him? and, cannot I worſhip him and ſerve him, by obſerving what others have done, and how they have worſhipped in Ages paſt, and ſo following them for my Example?*

Truth. God is a Spirit, and makes himſelf manifeſt in Spirit; and that which is truly reported of him, is from the Spirit's manifeſtation, which all the holy men of God were inſpired with, and made their Report from, and worſhipped God in; and thou mayeſt hear this Report, and reade it, but being from the Spirit of God manifeſt in thee, thou canſt neither know God, nor truly worſhip him; for God's Worſhip ſtands not in the obſervation, but in his living power, neither canſt thou follow the Example of the holy men of God, but by the leadings of the ſame Spirit, which they were guided by, and lived in.

Trad. *But it is ſafe for me to minde the Scriptures, and that which therein is reported, and to endeavour to obſerve and do it, and then I queſtion not but I ſhall know God, and be a true worſhipper of him.*

Truth. That which all are to minde, is the manifeſtation of God's Spirit,

Spirit, for that is his own gift to every man that they might profit; and all that turn to it, and believe in it, their understandings are opened in the power of it, and then the Scriptures are truly known; and this is safe and will not deceive any, but will bring the assurance with it of Eternal Life: for, as thou standest in the Questioning, so also in Doubting and Condemnation, and all thy endeavours will not profit thee, or bring assurance of Eternal Life unto thee; for it is not in him that willeth, or in him that runneth, but, standing still in obedience to the present manifestation of God's Spirit, Salvation is seen and shewed in the Mercy of God: So thou must lay down thy life in thy observation, which stands in thy Tradition, and come to Truths present manifestation

Trad. *But I cannot know the Truth but by the Scripture, for it is the Scripture that makes the Truth manifest, and from the Scripture do I set up my Worship, and there ought to be a Conformity yeelded unto it, and such as will not, to compel them by a Law.*

Truth. The understanding of Truth, is by the Spirit of Truth, and the Light of Christ in every man's Conscience makes it manifest; and this is reported in the Scripture, and is the sure Foundation, upon which the true Worship stands; and all that come to the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, they are truly subject to it, and bow before it, and yeeld all obedience to the manifestation of it: and this is the true Worship, and the true Worshippers; and they that come into this Worship, are not brought into it, or made conformable to it, by any National Law, neither do they seek after any such Law to force or compel others that differ from them, but commit it to the Power of God: And who comes into subjection to God's Power, and are made conformable unto that, they are the true Worshippers, and their service is performed unfeignedly, without any deceit or hypocrisie; and they appear not so much in an outward Conformity, as in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, in which they are approved in the sight of God: So, thy Worship is found out of the Truth, and contrary to the Scriptures; and thy Law of men, to compel into a Conformity unto thy Worship, is found to be Antichristian, and to stand only in thy own Tradition, and not in the Power of Christ; so thou must either prove it from the Scriptures, or all thou canst say of it will not be received for Truth.

Trad. *My Worship is that which hath been accustomed through many Generations, and from many antient Fathers I have good proof*

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498 *of it; and though some things may be practised in my Worship, which I cannot positively prove from the Scriptures, yet the continuance of them, and the National Law upholding them, makes them warrantable and out of question.*

Truth. That which is accustomed and not in the Power of God, is out of the Truth, and an evil custom, and is to be abolished and not maintained; for that is the subtil ground from which many are deceived, who have nothing to say for their Religion and Worship, but what in thy bowels is generated; saying, It hath been good, and why is it not so now? and, our Fathers thus worshipped, and why may not we? and the Nations Law warrants and upholds it, and we must be subject to the Law. Thus do thy Children reason from thy deceivable working, by which their minds are blinded, that they cannot see the things that are, but lye groping after things that have been, which now are not, and from the continuance draw conclusions of their lawfulness; And because Laws are made to uphold them, therefore are they subject to them; when the Nation's Law doth not reach, nor is not to meddle with things that pertain to God, or to the Conscience of any man: so that it doth not make the thing warrantable, or put it out of question, because it doth provide for the upholding of it, seeing it hath not any thing at all to do with it, but the Truth doth call it in question; And if it cannot be proved to be a practice which the Scriptures do allow, and warrant the lawfulness of it, Truth doth reprove it, and also the Nations Law that doth provide for the upholding of it.

Trad. *I would know what those things are that the Scriptures do not allow, or bear witness to, which in my Worship is set up, and doth belong unto it in the custom of it, and if they be but ceremonial, I shall not stand so much upon them; but as for my Fundamentals I shall prove them from Scriptures, and the Saints practice, to be sound.*

Truth. Lay down thy Fundamentals and what they are, that they may be known, and, in their place, come to Tryal, and be proved.

Trad. *These be the Foundation-Principles of my Religion, and of which I have good ground to believe that they are sound, because I find in the Scriptures that the Saints performed them, and served God in them; and also such as were appointed for the performance of them, which in my Worship I do truly observe, as they did; for I have Chur-*

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ches, and Preaching, and Praying, and Singing, and Bishops and Ministers to perform them, and also other Officers under them, which is for my Church-Order.

Truth. These in their place must all be examined and tryed, and by the Spirit of Truth proved, whether they be right in the ground, and have their rise from the Power of God; But what thou canst not prove amongst thy Ceremonies, to be warrantable from the Scriptures of Truth, open thine eye and behold them, that thou mayest see what Monsters thou hast generated, and brought forth from thy adulterous womb, and behold thy Eldest son that sits in the highest seat in *Rome*, who hath preferred and set up all thy Children in great honour and dignity; and people in the Darkness have run after them, without any enquiry from whence they came, and they have been delightful to the carnal mind, and from thence have been highly esteemed; and so hath the birth of thy adulterous womb deceived the Nations, and the names that thou hast given them are not to be found in the Scripture, as in any wayes to belong to the Saints Worship; thy Rails, thy Altars, thy Sacraments, thy Cross in Childrens foreheads, and sprinkling Water in their faces, and calling it Baptism; thy Organs, thy Anthems, thy Singing-men and Boyes, thy Hoods, thy Surplices and thy Tipits, with many other things which by thee is observed in thy Service and Worship, that the Lord never commanded, nor the Saints never practised, neither is there any Scripture for them, but thou hast generated them and brought them forth in this dark night of Apostasie, and hast set them up in thy Worship, as things of great use, and from that perswasion that in thy self thou hast of them, thou wouldest compel by thy Laws all others to bow unto them.

Trad. *I am reasonably satisfied from what hath been said, as to the Ceremonies belonging to my Worship, and I do see that they are not of such absolute necessity to be used, or by any Law to be imposed, therefore I shall be willing to leave every man to his liberty in observing them, and shall not force or compel any. But as for my Church, Preaching, Praying, Singing, Bishops and Ministers, they must be duly observed, and every man by a Law compelled thereunto, who in himself is not made willingly subject; for all these are warrantable from the Scriptures, and I have their names from thence, and in these cannot be deceived.*

Truth. I shall try them in order, and if I find them right in the ground I shall approve them, but if not, I must testifie against them;

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for, I judge not by the appearance, or by the names, but in the ground and nature; therefore speak plainly what thy Church is, and also shew the Foundation it stands upon, that I may proceed to tryal.

Trad. *My Church is that, which through many Generations hath been a place for my Worship to be performed in, and it is consecrated and set apart for that Service; and I have also looked many Ages past, and have found from antient Fathers that it hath been much set by and highly esteemed, therefore the Foundation cannot but be right, and I must uphold it and my Worship in it.*

Truth. Now I shall try thy Church, and the Foundation of it, and see upon what it stands: for if the Foundation be not right, the whole Building must fall; and there is no man can lay another Foundation than that which is layed, which is *Jesus Christ*, and that which is brought forth from his Power, that is of God; and this is the Church of the living God, *the pillar and ground of Truth*: And, if it be not in God, it is none of his, but an adulterated Harlot, covered over with the mystery of Iniquity. Therefore *Tradition* be silent a little, and *Truth* will shew thee thy Error, and let thee see the false Foundation thy Church stands upon, and also manifest the true Church, and thereby thou mayest see how far thou art degenerated from the Life and Truth which the Saints enjoyed and possessed, and upon which the Church of God hath ever been builded and stood. So, be cool, and hear what Truth saith, for now thy Church comes to tryal.

Thou hast perverted the right way of the Lord by thy Tradition, and hast been setting up thy visible things in the stead of that which is spiritual, and hast given them a name out of the nature, by which thou hast deceived the Nations, and thy things that do appear are not the things of God; though thou hast made them very beautiful to behold, yet a sandy foundation they stand upon, and will not abide the day of tryal; for the Foundation of thy Church is of thy own laying, and the Building is thy own handy-work, and thy Church hath been set up in the midnight of Apostasie, since the true Church hath been driven into the Wilderness; and the Consecration of it hath been performed by men of polluted lips, and thy Eldest son hath been the promoter of it, who himself hath lost the key of knowledge, and so promotes and sets up what thou generates in thy bowels; and this is come to pass since the dayes of the Apostles, the Spirit of Truth being lost and ravined from, darkness hath overspred, and gross darkness hath covered, and peoples minds have been blinded, that thy Witch-

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craft and Sorceries hath not been perceived, and so hast thou formed a false likeness, and given it a true name, by which thou hast deceived, in drawing the minds of people to believe that thy work is that which it is not: But the Foundation of God is more sure, and the true Church is built upon it, and receives its name from the nature, and not from any false conception; for, the Church is in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this is the pillar and ground of Truth, and is laid upon *Christ* the living stone, in whom the building is fitly framed, and groweth up unto an holy Temple in the Lord, and it is presented without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and there is the Consecration of it, received in the Holiness of his life, and he becomes the Head of it, and it is truly his own Body, which he takes to himself in everlasting Righteousness, and espouseth it in his Life for ever and ever; and this doth not decay nor wax old, but is the same, without any variableness, throughout all Generations. So is thy Church truly tryed, and the Foundation of it is found false, and the true Church-nature it hath not; therefore is the name to be blotted out, that from henceforth none may be deceived with it.

Trad. *This is strange, that my Church should be questioned, which through so many Ages hath been much esteemed and promoted; and, if it be not right, then what is become of those that are gone before, and did not know it otherwise?*

Truth. In thick darkness things seem to be that which they are not, but the day makes them manifest as they are, and the Light of Christ truly discovers in the ground, and being found amiss they must be questioned, and also denied. And what other Generations have observed, and how they walked, is not now the question; for, they knowing no more, and being faithful to what they did know, they have their reward: And this proves nothing for thy false Church and Worship, which thou upholdest by thy Tradition, and not from the present manifestation of God's Spirit in this Age and Generation.

Trad. *I shall further consider of this; but for my Preaching, which is a chief thing in my Worship, I know that is sound, and there can be nothing against it.*

Truth. That Preaching which stands in the demonstration of Gods Spirit, and in Power, is sound Preaching, and pierces through the darkness unto that which lies in bondage, and revives and raises it in Power; But that Preaching which stands in the enticing words of man's wisdom, that is not sound: and this is the ground of thy Preach-

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ing, which is ſo chiefly eſteemed by thee in thy Worſhip, and by which thou deceiveſt many people, having got good words, and in thy wiſdom ſpeakeſt them forth, and laboureſt in the ſtrength of that wiſdom to entice and draw diſciples after thee; and ſo doſt thou teach for Doctrine thy own Tradition, and other mens lines and labours are the ſtrength of thy Preaching; and what *Ambroſe, Auſtine, Luther, Calvin, Gregory*, and others have ſaid, and what Expoſitions they have made of the Scriptures, thou canſt ſay, they have well obſerved. And this is the ground of thy Preaching, O thou deceiving Tradition. And now is thy Preaching found to be out of Truths power, and contrary to the Preaching of thoſe, that were made able Miniſters, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit.

Trad. *But cannot I have ſound Preaching in my Worſhip, though ſomething from the Fathers may be quoted and obſerved? for, they have ſpoken good things, and have expounded the Scriptures plainly, and given true meanings of them, which is a great help in Preaching.*

Truth. Sound Preaching is in the Power of God, and not from any Expoſition or meaning that from others is given upon the Scriptures; for, who run thither, and ſpeak from that, they ſtretch themſelves beyond their own meaſure, which the true Preachers dare not do, but keep to the gift of God; and as it moves in the meaſure, ſo it is preached, and ſo believed: For true Preaching is a declaration of the Truth of God, as it doth ariſe and make it felt manifeſt to the underſtanding; and ſo there comes to be a true witneſſing of it in the Experience, through the operation of the Power of God, from which it is preached as it is known: and this is not found among old Authors and Expoſitors, nor in thy Rhetorick and Logick, or in thy made Doctrines, Uſes, Reaſons, Helps, Motives, Arguments, and Applications, but in the Spirit's Demonſtration and in Power.

Trad. *What is it I can ſay that will be received, and not oppoſed? Thoſe things that I have long obſerved, and Ages paſt have looked at them to be very good, now are denyed; but for my Praying in my Worſhip, that I know is right and without exception, for it is mentioned in the Scriptures, and was practiſed very much by the Saints; and I have the Lord's Prayer, and have made many other good Prayers, and have ſet them forth, which be very uſeful and comfortable for all conditions, and upon all occaſions; and I have put them together in a Book, which I call the Book of* Common-Prayer, *and make uſe of it in my Devotion and Worſhip.*

Truth.

Truth. Prayer in the Spirit the Saints practiſed, and their Service was accepted; but from this thou art degenerated, and in thy Tradition haſt made and formed ſuch Prayers as the Lord hath not required, neither doth he open his ear to hear them, though thou makeſt many of them; and that which thou calleſt the *Lord's Prayer*, which is ſo often ſet down in thy Book of *Common-Prayer*, and with mouths and lips ſo often repeated, be thou ſilent, and make no mention of it, for thou haſt nothing to do with it; and though thou haſt the words to ſpeak, yet thou doſt not perform the duty of Prayer, being from the Spirit that maketh Interceſſion with groans that cannot be uttered: For Prayer ſtands not in words but in power, and the breathings go forth in ſecret, and the Father that ſeeth in ſecret he rewardeth openly; and the Babe receives a ſupply of what it ſtands in need of; and this is performed in the Spirit that knows the need, and makes requeſts with ſighs and groans unexpreſſible, and alſo moves unto words and expreſſions: and here is the unlimited Power, which worketh according to the good pleaſure of its own Will, which thou haſt limited in thy ſet Forms and made Prayers, having given forth thy Directions what muſt be ſaid, and how much at a time; and people muſt ſay no more, nor go no further; and ſometimes thy Miniſter muſt ſay, and ſometimes the People muſt ſay, and ſometimes the Clerk muſt ſay: Is not this thy practice in thy Common-Prayer-Book-Worſhip? haſt thou not made Epiſtles and Goſpels, and Collects, and appointed them for their dayes and times? and haſt thou not made a Letany, for thy Prieſt to ſay a part, and the People to ſay a part? and haſt thou not given directions how People muſt be Married, and haſt ſet a Form and made Prayers for the performance of that Service; and alſo how People muſt be Buried, and what is to be ſaid and done in that Service; and what the Prieſt is to ſay, and what the Clerk is to ſay? And haſt thou not ſet a Form and made many Prayers when Bread and Wine is to be received, which thou calleſt a Sacrament? and haſt thou not ſet a Form of words for the Prieſt to ſay unto the People when he gives it, and how it muſt be received, and what words the Prieſt muſt ſpeak kneeling, and what ſtanding; and when he muſt turn his face to the People, and ſpeak with a loud voice, and when he muſt turn his face another way? And haſt thou not ſet a Form and made Prayers for Women to be Churched, and what the Prieſt muſt ſay, and how he muſt pray in that Service? And haſt thou not ſet a Form and made Prayers for

Children when they are ſprinkled with Water, which thou calleſt Baptizing? and haſt thou not ordered that there ſhall be ſome people provided to undertake for them? and haſt not thou given them the names of Godfathers and Godmothers? and haſt thou not ordered that for a Male-Child there muſt be two Men and one Woman, and for a Female, two Women and one Man? and haſt thou not ſet a Form in words, what the Prieſt muſt ſay unto them, and what they muſt ſay unto the Prieſt? And haſt not thou ordered, that after all theſe things performed which thou haſt invented, then the Prieſt to pronounce the Peace of God, and the Bleſſing of God upon all the Congregation, and then the Service is concluded? And is not this thy Common-Prayer-Book-Worſhip, in which thou art limiting the Holy One, through thy Tradition; and teaching people to ask and pray, when the Spirit is not felt to help them? And have not people been long asking in thy formed words, but have not received, neither are they ſatisfied? Oh thou adulterous Tradition, what monſtrous births haſt thou brought forth? and what names haſt thou given them? and how like are thy names unto that which is true? Thou haſt given thy formed words the name of Prayer, and canſt ſay, *Come, let us pray*, when thou neither feeleſt the movings of God's Spirit, nor his Power, but in thy own words, which thou haſt made and formed, canſt ſpeak in thy own will, and in thy own time, and give it the name of Prayer: and with thy names haſt thou deceived the Nations, who have not underſtood the nature; and thy named Church, and Preaching and Praying, haſt thou vailed over with coverings of thy own making, which are now rending off from thee; and thou canſt not hide thy ſelf any longer under the Names, for now is the Nature ſeen in the pure Light of Chriſt, which makes all things manifeſt; and thy Common-Prayer-Book is ſeen to be conceived in thy adulterous womb, and to branch forth from the Pope thy Eldeſt ſon, and thou art made manifeſt to be out of the Truth, and thy Service and Worſhip contrary to the Scriptures of Truth, and to the Saints Practice, who prayed with the Spirit and with the Underſtanding.

Trad. *But what if my Common-Prayer-Book do not fully agree with the Scriptures and the Saints Practice, yet there are many good things in it, and many Scripture-ſentences, which may edifie and comfort?*

Truth. That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh, and that is againſt the Spirit, and can neither edifie nor comfort, though good words and

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and Scripture-ſentences may be ſpoken: for it is not ſpeaking the words of others that doth make a true Prayer or a living Sacrifice, but the receiving a meaſure of the ſame Spirit of Prayer and Supplication, and ſo feel it poured forth, by which Interceſſion is made, and a living Sacrifice performed, holy and acceptable, which is not in thy Common-Prayer-Book to be found; therefore it is made of none effect, becauſe thy bowels bring it forth, and the Pope gives life and breath unto it, and from his loyns it draws its ſtrength, and not from the Power of God.

Trad. *I ſee it is a very hard matter to be owned and received in this day; for I could not have been believed that I ſhould have ever been oppoſed, or my Church, Preaching or Praying denied; but my Singing, which is another part of my Worſhip, that is ſo plainly manifeſted to be the Saints Practice, that certainly there is none can deny that.*

Truth. Singing is owned where it is rightly uſed and practiſed, and who are raiſed out of the day of mourning by the Power of God, and have a Pſalm given them in the Spirit, they may ſing and make melody in their hearts unto the Lord; and this is a Spiritual Song which is put into the mouths of the Babes, who ſing with the Spirit and with the Underſtanding: but *David's* words being rimed, and then tuned, and the mouths of Hypocrites filled with them, is ſuch a practice as the Saints never uſed; ſo that the mouths of all thy Singers muſt be ſtopped, who have never mourned, nor have not learned to ſing with the Spirit and with the Underſtanding.

Trad. *But there may be ſome that are joyful in the Lord; and though all cannot witneſs that ſtate, yet they may ſing whoſe right it is.*

Truth. None in the Fall have any right to ſing; but the Ranſomed return with Songs; and theſe Songs are not *David's* words put into meeter, and then tuned, and ſung with a vain mind; but the living Praiſes of the Lord ſounded forth of the Babes mouth: So thy Singing muſt come into ſilence, and there ſink down, untill thou haſt paſſed through the day of mourning to receive a Pſalm in the Spirit, and with the Spirit, and with the Underſtanding to ſing it.

Trad. *What can I ſay to be received for Truth? my Ceremonies they are all denied and diſproved; and my Fundamentals they are ſtrongly oppoſed, yet I ſhall not be out of love with them, though much*

much hath been ſaid againſt them, for I know my Biſhops and Miniſters ſet much by them, and chiefly by my Common-Prayer-Book, for it is a great help unto them, and with the uſe of it, their Service is made eaſie to them. And there can be nothing ſaid againſt my Biſhops and Miniſters, the Scriptures ſpeake ſo plainly of them.

Truth. He that deſires the Office of a Biſhop, he deſires a good thing; and he that is a Miniſter of Chriſt, and laboureth in the Word and Doctrine, he is worthy of double honour: and here was the Power of God in *Timothy* and *Titus*, who were true Biſhops, and the Power of God ſet them in that Office: and the deſire of this is a good thing; and by the Power of God they were Redeemed out of the Earth, and were not covetous nor greedy of filthy lucre, nor proud and lifted up; but with all meekneſs, gentleneſs and patience, they were inſtant in the Word. And it may be read in 1 *Tim.* 3. what *Paul* did write concerning a Biſhop, and what manner of perſon he ought to be, and how he is to behave himſelf. And there is nothing ſpoken of an Arch-Biſhop, or a Lord Biſhop, or of a Dioceſs, or hundreds a year for their maintenance; but he he ſaith, *they muſt not be Novices, leſt being lifted up with Pride they fall into the Condemnation of the Devil.* So it is not the name of a Biſhop, but the Power of God which is to be deſired, in which the Office ſtandeth, and is a good thing; and this makes a Biſhop, and ſets him in his Office, and to ſee to his Place with diligence. And he that mindes the Power of God, and deſires the Power of God, he deſires the Office of a Biſhop, and ſo comes into the good work, that is wrought in the Power of God, where he is rightly ordered in his Office, and in which his Office ſtands: And ſuch a one is not a Novice, nor lifted up with Pride, but ſtands in the Power and Wiſdom of God, and rules in his Office with all meekneſs and humbleneſs of mind; and he ſtands ready to watch over the whole Flock of God, and to inſtruct the younger in the Power of God, in which he bears his Office: and who comes to the Power of God, they come to the true Miniſtry, and are true Labourers for God, and are inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, that they may gather People to God: and as they receive the Gift of God in the power, ſo they miniſter, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God: and ſuch are true Biſhops and true Miniſters, who are born not of the will of man, nor of fleſh, nor of

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blood, but of God, and receive their Office and Miniſtration in the Power of God.

And now, *Tradition*, hearken what *Truth* ſaith, and give thy Anſwer to what is demanded of thee. Who made thy Arch-Biſhops and Lord-Biſhops? and who gave them thoſe Names? and who firſt divided unto them their ſeveral Dioceſſes, and appointed them to rule within their own Dioceſs? And who firſt made Deans and Prebends, Doctors, Vicars, and Curates? and who gave unto them their Names? And who firſt ſet up certain places for Schools? and who gave the name of Univerſities? and who ſet up the ſeveral Colledges? and how came they to be called *Chriſt's Colledge*, and *Emmanuel Colledge*, and *John's Colledge*, and *Jeſus Colledge*, with other names ſeverally for them? and who gave them ſuch Names? and who firſt ordained that men ſhould be made Miniſters at theſe Schools and Colledges, and no where elſe? and who firſt ordered, that if he have not been ſo many years at thoſe places, and commenced to his Degrees, he cannot be approved? and who ſet up ſuch Commencements and Degrees, that a man muſt be made a Batchellour of Art, or a Maſter of Art, before he can be approved to be a Miniſter in thy Order? Who firſt brought up all theſe things, and from whence have they ſprung? And who firſt ordained that the Tenth part of things increaſing unto people, ſhould be paid to thy Colledge-Miniſters? and who firſt made that Law which forces and compells the payment of the Tenth part of things increaſed, unto ſuch a Miniſtry? and whether are ſuch the Miniſters of Chriſt, who make uſe of that Law to force their Maintenance, contrary to the freedom of people; and to proceed againſt ſuch as cannot give it them freely, by ſuing and impriſoning their bodies, and ſpoyling their goods? Are theſe thy Biſhops and Miniſters, which thou ſayeſt there can be nothing ſaid againſt them? Open thine eye, and behold them, for they are Monſters, which from thy adulterous Conception are brought forth, and they are ſtamped with thy Image, and not with the Power of God; and all thy Abominations are denied and teſtified againſt, being ſeen in the Eternal Spirit of God to be out of the Truth of God, and contrary to the Scriptures and practice of the Saints; and thou haſt no proof for the lawfulneſs of any of them, but Continuance and Cuſtom, through which thou haſt brought in thy Tradition, which hath received ſtrength from the Pope thy Eldeſt ſon, who hath ſet it up for Doctrine and

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Worſhip within the bowels of *England*, and hath made Laws and Statutes in the dark night of Apoſtaſie for the upholding of it, and compelling all people unto a Conformity to it. This is a Charge againſt thee; and if thou haſt any thing to ſay for the clearing of thy ſelf, Truth will hear thee.

Trad. *I have eſteemed very much of my Biſhops and Miniſters, and looked upon them to be exceeding ſerviceable in my Worſhip; and having elected them into ſuch Places, and put them upon ſuch Offices, I judge it but a reaſonable thing to provide well for their Maintenance; and there is not a more equal way that I could find out, than by requiring the Tenth part of things encreaſed unto people, and providing a Law to compel it from ſuch as will not freely pay it; and I have ſetled them in certain Places, and over certain People, which in their reſpective Pla[illegible] are to maintain them, by yeelding and paying that part of their Increaſe as I have appointed for them; and though I have not Scripture for the Warrant of it, yet I have brought it forth as a thing that is decent and orderly.*

Truth. That which is decent and orderly, is brought forth in the Power of God, and that brings forth all things juſtly and equally, and orders one man to do to another, as they would have another to do unto them; and this doth not compel any man to pay or part with any of his Increaſe, contrary to his own freedom, or elſe to ſue him, and impriſon his body, and ſpoyl his goods; for he himſelf would not be ſo done unto: So that what thou haſt provided for the maintenance of thy Biſhops and Miniſters, is not according to the Truth of God, nor anſwereth not to the Maintenance of Biſhops and Miniſters in the Primitive times, who firſt gathered people unto the Spirituall, before they reaped their Carnall; and they had no need to compel the Carnall by a Law, after they had gathered them to the Spirituall, and brought them to taſte of that; there was then an openneſs and a freeneſs begotten in their hearts to miniſter their whole Subſtance, and to lay it down at the feet of them that had begotten them into the Truth, and laboured amongſt them in the Service of God; and here was no ſetting out any part of what was encreaſed, and a Law to compel it, either of the Ninth or Tenth, or any other part; but the whole Subſtance freely offered, and ſo much taken of it as there was need. And this is as truly truſted in the hands of true Biſhops

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and Ministers now, and they receive what they need, and no more: and whether it be the Tenth, or Twentieth, or Thirtieth part, if it supply their need, they are truly contented; and so they gather Flocks, and feed upon the Milk of those they have gathered; and plant Vineyards, and eat the Fruit of them; but do not compell by any outward Law, Milk to be given them out of another Flock, nor Fruit out of another Vineyard: So that thy decent Order which thou speakest of, is proved Confusion and Disorder, being out of the life and power of Truth; and all thy vain Tradition is seen with the pure Light of Christ, in which all things are made manifest, and with the Light and Truth thou art reproved.

Trad. *Certainly this thing which makes such discoveries of my practices, and with such boldness reproves me for them, it is of God; for it is not in any fear of me or my Power, which now is strong and in great authority, and unto which I had thought all would have bowed, without disputing or questioning; but I see there is that risen that appears against me, and makes such discoveries of me, that I cannot keep hid any longer; therefore I shall let it alone, and deal with others that I can cause to be subject; for, the more I deal with this Manifestation of Truth, the more is my Tradition discovered and opened unto all People; so that it is safest for me to be quiet and let it alone, lest by striving to uphold all, I come to lose all, and so be rejected and disesteemed; and all my Honour and Dignity, wherein I now stand, be laid in the dust, and trodden upon: And if I had thought that there had been such a thing made manifest in this Age, as the Truth, I should have been more reserved and retired, but I had thought I might have boasted and gloryed in my own handy-work, and that it would have passed without being questioned, as heretofore it hath done; but now I see it is otherwise, therefore I shall be silent.*

Truth. That which doth discover thee and thy deceitfull practice, that is a Manifestation of God, and is the Truth of God, which was before thou hadst a name, and will abide when thy name is lost; and it doth boldly reprove thee, and is without any fear of thee or thy power, and hath opened thee, and ript up thy bowels, and discovered thy adulterous womb, and all the false conceptions that have been conceived therein; and it hath made manifest thy first-born and eldest son, unto whom thou hast given a name, and calls him

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510 the *Pope of Rome*; and thy younger Children are also by the Truth discovered, and the names which thou hast given them, by which thou hast deceived the Nations.

Now, behold ye *Arch-Bishops*, *Lord-Bishops*, *Deans*, *Prebends*, *Doctors*, *Vicars*, *Curates*, and all *Prelaticals*, here is the womb of your conception opened, and that made manifest from which you draw your breath, and prolong the length of your dayes, with all your Service and Worship, which you so much esteem and promote, and labour to compel a Conformity to; It is here discovered in the Power of Truth, and you may see, by perusing this *Catechism* in moderation, your great degeneration from the Life of the *Prophets*, *Christ* and the *Apostles*, and how the Names invented, and the Worship by you practised, differ in the ground from the Practice and Worship that the Saints performed in the Power of God's Spirit. Where have you from the Scriptures, or the Saints Practice, any Precept or President for your builded Church of Wood and Stone, your Bells hanging in the end of it, and to toul and ring them when you would have people come together to your Worship; your set-time before mid-day, and your set-time after mid-day to meet together, and perform your Worship, your Common-Prayer-Book and your Letany, and your Prayers, divided and appointed when and how to be said; your Preaching in your methods and forms, your Text taking, and your Doctrines raising, with your Uses, Reasons, Helps, Motives, Arguments and Applications; your Singing in the riming and tuning; your Bishopricks and Dioceses; your Deanries and Prebendries; your Doctors, Vicars and Curates; your Tithes and set Maintenance; your great Livings and lesser Livings; your Parishes, and places of Settlement; your Mattens and Evensong; your Organs, Rails, Altars, Fonts, Sacraments, Crossing Children in their foreheads, and sprinkling Water in their faces, and calling it Baptism; your Anthems, and your Singing-men and Boyes to sing them; your Hoods, Surplices and Tipits; with many other things which by you are observed in your Service and Worship, that the Lord never commanded, nor the Saints ever practised, nor any Scripture to prove the lawfulness of them? Therefore consider the rise of them, and the truth of them, before you pursue so eagerly to impose them, or compel a Conformity to them; for tender people, who are come to the least manifestation of Truth, they cannot bear such

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an Imposition upon their Consciences; though by Laws and Statutes you may strive to impose them, and proceed against them as transgressors, if they deny submission to them, yet will not your Cruelty bring tender People into a Conformity to your Traditions; and if you will but consider coolly, and pursue this *Catechism* soberly, you will see that it is not reasonable, to compel a Conformity unto those things that you are setting up and practising in your Devotion and Worship, or to impose them upon the Consciences of any people, but rather leave all to stand in their own liberty, and to chuse or refuse as they are perswaded in their own Conscience; which is but a reasonable thing to be granted: for, if you see no further in your selves than that which Tradition hath brought in, and set up, and you in your Conscience be perswaded of its lawfulness, and perform it as a matter of Conscience; would you think it reasonable to be compelled from that unto another thing, and have another thing imposed upon your Consciences by any outward power, which you do not feel a perswasion in your minds unto? And if this seem hard unto you if it should be so done, Then is it not the same unto another, And will you not do unto others, as you would have others do unto you? And why cannot you be contented in your own perswasion, and your own liberty in it, without imposing it upon the Consciences of others who are otherwise perswaded? And this is not reasonable in the sight of moderate men; therefore leave off exercising Lordship, that all people may stand in their Liberty, and walk as they are perswaded in their own Conscience, and impose not your Observations and your Traditions upon any, who are not in themselves perswaded of their lawfulness; for that makes many Hypocrites, but can never make one Christian. So, there must be first a perswasion wrought in the Conscience, and a belief in the Truth and Lawfulness of what is to be observed, or the heart can never stand right unto it, though it be in great strictness imposed: And this brings people but into an appearance, and to make a shew of the thing outwardly, when the heart is not after the thing which is imposed upon them; and when a Conformity is not yeelded, as by your Law is required, then to proceed in your Cruelty to imprison and persecute the tender-hearted, who cannot for Conscience-sake bow to your Traditions; This is not reasonable before moderate men, nor approved in the sight of the living God. Therefore, hear and consider, ye Bishops,

Deans, Prebends, Doctors, Vicars and Curates, with all Prelaticals, and let your moderation appear, for the Lord is at hand, and in his Eternal Power your way he is trying, and you must come up to the Bar of his Judgment-Seat, and give an account; and think it not strange to be catechised, for you have need to be taught what the first principle of the pure Religion is; and if you will but soberly peruse this *Catechism*, you may know and learn that which your Universities could never give you the knowledge of, nor all your Learning and Wisdom could ever teach you; And in love to the Simple hath Truth opened it self plainly and simply, that you might come to know that which in the darkness hath from your eyes been hid, and that you might no longer oppose it, and persecute those that walk in it, but leave Truth to its operation, which brings forth true and perfect Freedom; and if you did but know the Truth, and the Freedom that is begotten in it, you would not be so envious against it, and set up your Tradition in opposition to it: But this is done that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *they hated me without a cause*. And this is your honour and worldly glory, which lifts you up in pride, which God is staining. And now, do you believe that your Foundation is right, and your Building safe? I tell you, Nay; for, God will destroy both it and you, if you do not speedily cease from it, and repent of it, and do not busie and throng your selves so much to promote it, and to finish it; for God hath determined to overthrow it for ever, Oh ye deceived men, who have no strength but in your Tradition, nor no comfort but from the milk of her breast; you have been long drawing and sucking, and yet are dry and lean, and your immortal Souls receive no refreshing nor satisfaction. Why are ye so blinded, and so much deceived, and cannot otherwise be perswaded but that Tradition is the right way, and from that Conclusion, endeavour an Imposition upon every Conscience, when their Faith stands not in the same thing, nor are not so perswaded of it as you are? and what have you to do to impose Tradition upon the Consciences of others, more than others to impose their Opinions and Judgments upon your Consciences? And, would you judge it reasonable that any should so do unto you? And if it belong unto you to do it on your parts, more than others to do it on their parts, then make it manifest how, and from whom you have received that power? For moderate men are now satisfied, that Schools and Colledges cannot give it you; and they are also satisfied

fied, that Christ doth not give it you, and also that [illegible] Scripture to warrant you; therefore Truth enquires modestly of you, from whence, and from whom this Imposing Power upon the Consciences of others you receive, seeing it is made manifest that you walk by Tradition and not after Christ: For Imposition and Persecution are an evident Testimony against you, and fully open and make you manifest to be of a contrary spirit unto the Apostles, who were hated and persecuted, yet they loved and blessed, and here they manifested their love unto Him, who commanded that they should love their Enemies, and do good to those that hated them; and they were his Disciples, and kept his Commandments. And all that truly follow him in this day, he begets in them the same mind, and they keep his Commandments with joy, and dare not persecute any people upon the Earth for their Opinion and Judgment in matters of Religion; nor dare they impose any thing upon the Consciences of others by any outward Law, but leave it to Him that judgeth righteously, who hath the Ruling Power over the Conscience; and as he is believed in, he works a perswasion in the Conscience unto the Truth, as he makes it manifest; and then the Truth is joyned unto, from a true Perswasion, and not from an outward Imposition; and you are not to judge in these things, for in so doing you take his Right from Him, and set up that which is not his; and when you have done it, then you labour to impose it upon every Conscience: And this is a quite contrary thing to the Saints practice, who durst not set up any thing that did not stand in the Power of God; and when the Power had brought any thing forth, they did not impose it upon the Conscience of any by an outward Law, that they thereby might compel a Conformity to it, but they preached it in the Power, and so commended themselves unto every man's Conscience in the sight of God. Therefore, behold your degeneration, and what hath happened unto you in this apostatizing night of darkness, in which you have erred from the right way, and gone astray from the leadings of God, and from the Power of his living Spirit, and so have brought forth your own dead works, and are serving the living God in them: And what you have sought out in your Tradition, that you have set up for Doctrine and Worship, and would bring all people to bow unto it; but now the day declares you, and in the Land of Tradition the Light hath found you, and the habitation of your dwelling-places is seen under the Groves and green Trees of

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your own planting, and moderate people cannot come unto you, nor inhabite with you; for your Rest is polluted, and sudden destruction is coming upon it.

Now all *Bishops*, *Deans*, *Prebends*, *Doctors*, *Vicars*, *Curates*, and all *Prelaticals*, turn to the Truth, and lay hold upon it, and let Tradition go; for Truth was before Tradition, and the Truth will bring Tradition to an end. So your Foundation is not safe, nor your Building steadfast, but stands in the unstable waters of your own humane Inventions, and not upon Christ the Rock of Ages. And now Truth hath moderately enquired after you, and having found you out of the Life of the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles, it warns you all to Repentance, that the Judgment may be diverted, and the hand of Severity stayed, which certainly is hastening down upon you, without speedy Repentance. So escape for your lives, that the stroak may not fall upon you, and smite you down into the Death for ever.

Now all you High and Mighty, Wise and Learned Ones, give ear and hear *Truth's Testimony*, and see if you can reade the Parable, and learn what it means.

Truth. 'I was a stranger in a far Country, and amongst a strange 'people, and under the Government of a strange King. I was in 'great Captivity, and a great distance from the Land of my Nati-'vity; and I had many heavie Yokes laid upon me, and the strange 'people did evil entreat me, and the strange King did sorely oppress 'me, and laid heavie Burdens upon me; and when I had any de-'sires towards the Land of my Nativity, then did the strange King 'rise up against me, and sorely afflicted me, and was cruel to-'wards me. I sought how I might get forth of his Country, that 'I might be freed from his Cruelty. I sought, but I could not 'find; I travelled in sore pain, but could not find a man to give 'me ease. Then my sorrow did much encrease, and my anguish 'was sore upon me, so that I was near unto fainting and despairing; 'yet a secret hope sometimes rose in me, that I should be delivered 'and set free. Then I came into a stillness, and in quietness stayed, 'and in patience waited, though I was desolate and sore afflicted; 'and being brought to stand still, and in patience to wait, a Deli-'verer I found near at hand, and from the Land of my Nativity a 'pure Light did shine, and in it I see the way opened which passed

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'through the Land, and I presently joyned to the [illegible] and
'went forward towards the place from whence it came, and I fol-
'lowed it diligently: Then did the King and People rise to pursue
'me, to have taken and to have kept me; but the Light took my
'part, and smote the King with his People, and discomfited them,
'and brake the Yoke, and removed the Burdens from me; it was
'my guide, and led me by the hand, and from the wicked King
'and People it me redeemed: Then was my sorrow turned into joy,
'and my mourning into songs of praises; for Deliverance came by
'an out-stretched Arm, and my Freedom was wrought by an in-
'visible living Power, unto which my Testimony stands for ever.

TRUTH.

In outward Bands at *Worcester*, but inwardly free in the Life of my Well-beloved.

THE END.